

Testimony

ILHIE Data Security & Privacy Committee

Thursday, May 3, 2012

Marriott Bloomington-Normal Hotel & Conference Center

Normal, IL

Good Morning, Chairman Panomitros and members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide testimony on how we can improve patient care with the institution of a HIE in central Illinois. My name is Vicki Day, and I am a family nurse practitioner. I have worked for Saint James John W. Albrecht Medical Center in Pontiac, IL, for 35 years. The medical center is part of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis Health Care System in Peoria, Illinois. My testimony represents my 37 years of experience in the nursing profession. Additionally, I am a member of the 377 and 708 Boards of Livingston County. My current position within the Order of Saint Francis Medical Group allows me to work and provide primary care to individuals in the OSFMG clinic in Chenoa Illinois with Dr. Daniel Lau. This clinic is one of four clinics owned by OSF Saint James/JWAMC that is a FQHC. The other half of my time is spent in the Prompt Care of OSFMG at Saint James.

In my care of patients in both of the offices, I frequently encounter individuals who are taking multiple medications. The OSF Health Care System has an electronic medical record which has been extremely advantageous in monitoring the medications that individuals take. However, many patients who have mental health issues do not have a primary care physician and are receiving care for their mental health outside of our system. The mental health provider for Livingston County is the Institute for Human Resources and they are not on an electronic medical record system. When these individuals present for care within our system the current medications they are taking from their mental health provider are not readily confirmable. Additionally, these individuals often are unable to provide a complete list of the medications that they are taking. This situation allows for poor continuity of care at least and the risk of medication interactions with the medications for the acute care issue for which they have presented.

As a member of the Mental Health 708 Board of Livingston County I am painfully aware of our limited resources for psychiatric care both for adults and children. The schedule of availability is a matter of days in a month. If an individual is discharged from an inpatient psychiatric facility they are then referred back to the local mental health provider who with their permission would receive records of their care. They are usually discharged with a limited supply

of medications. If this supply runs out before their set appointment with the psychiatrist then there is the risk that going off the medications may precipitate a readmission. Primary Care physicians have at times been called on to prescribe a further supply of these medications without the records of the previous care facility.

The exchange of information to facilitate the seamless availability of a patient's health information can benefit more than just the primary health providers. The care of the whole patient in today's environment should not be compartmentalized into specialties. Health issues, both physical and mental, do not exist separate from one another, swings in blood sugars in the patient with diabetes can certainly affect their behavior. Without the knowledge of the medical diagnosis the mental health provider may improperly treat the behavioral issue.

In all three of these situations I have described to you there has been an issue of consistency and safety, which can affect quality of patient care. A reevaluation of Illinois' Privacy Act and a Health Information Exchange could bridge the gap of knowledge between all specialties of health care providers to the benefit of individuals and their health as a whole.

In conclusion, privacy of health care information is extremely important but I believe a balance must be sought to allow for the sharing of diagnoses and medications to pass from one care center to another for the sake of patient safety and continuity of care. We must be able to treat the whole patient. Thank you for allowing me to share my experiences with this committee.

Respectfully submitted

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